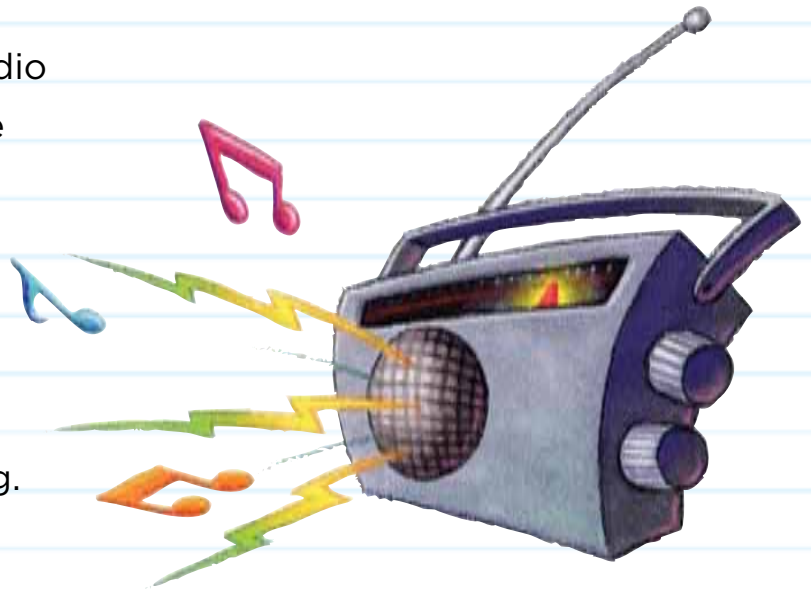


VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

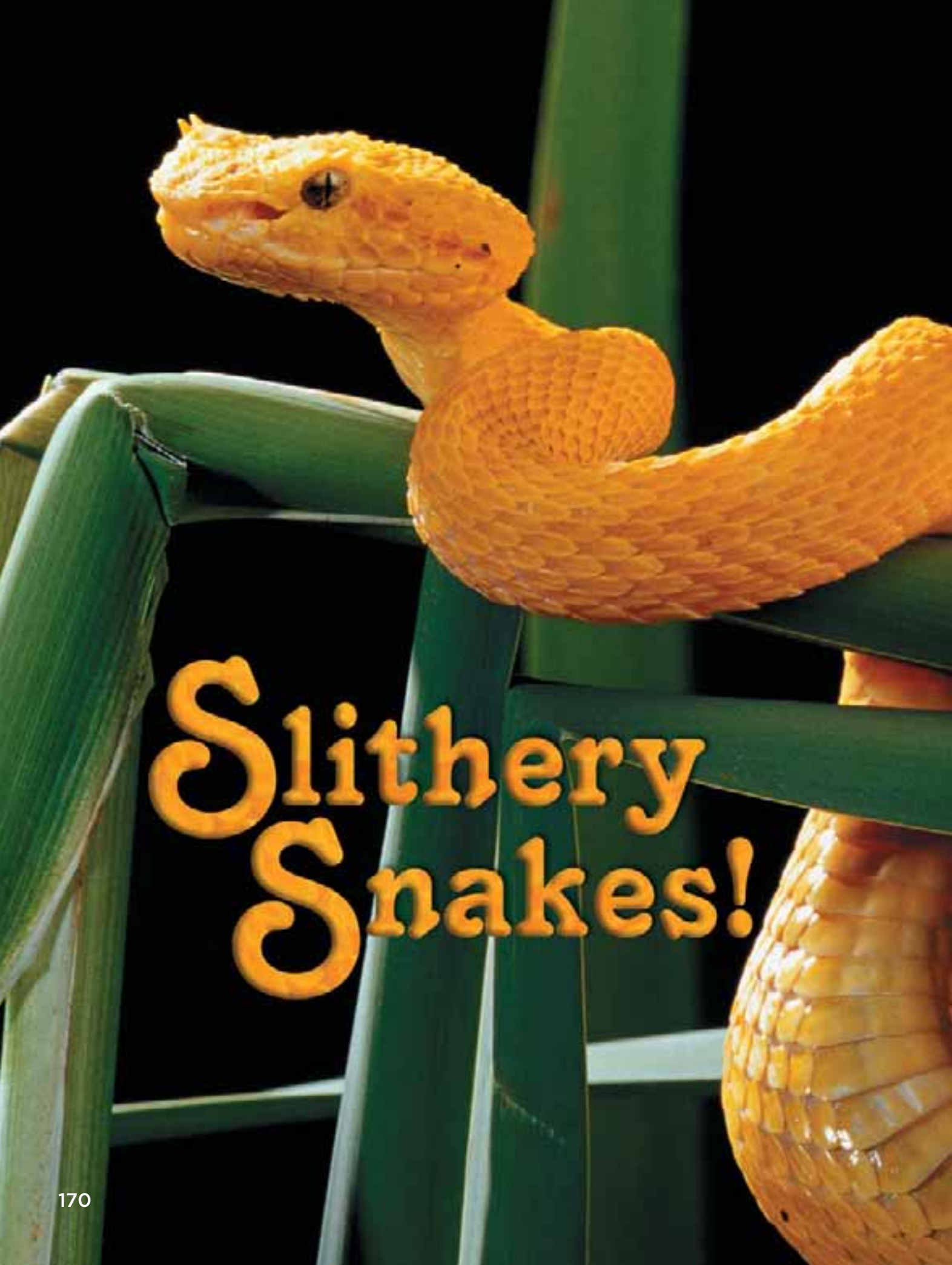
Your Turn

Write an advertisement for radio or television that will convince listeners to support an event sponsored by kids. Create a strong opening that will make listeners consider your cause. Use the writer's checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- ☐ **Ideas and Content:** Are the listeners interested in the advertisement because of the **strong opening**?
- ☒ **Organization:** Do the supporting details of the advertisement keep the audience's attention?
- ☒ **Voice:** Can the listeners tell from the ad that I really care about the event?
- ☒ **Word Choice:** Does the advertisement include lots of words with positive connotations?
- ☒ **Sentence Fluency:** When I read the advertisement aloud, does it flow well?
- ☒ **Conventions:** Did I capitalize proper nouns?
Did I check my spelling?



Slithery Snakes!



Talk About It

When you hear the word “snake” what do you think of? What are some facts that you know about snakes?



Find out more about snakes at www.macmillanmh.com

Poisonous SNAKES

by Thomas Kane

Vocabulary

species	surroundings
survive	prey
alert	predators
vibrates	lunging



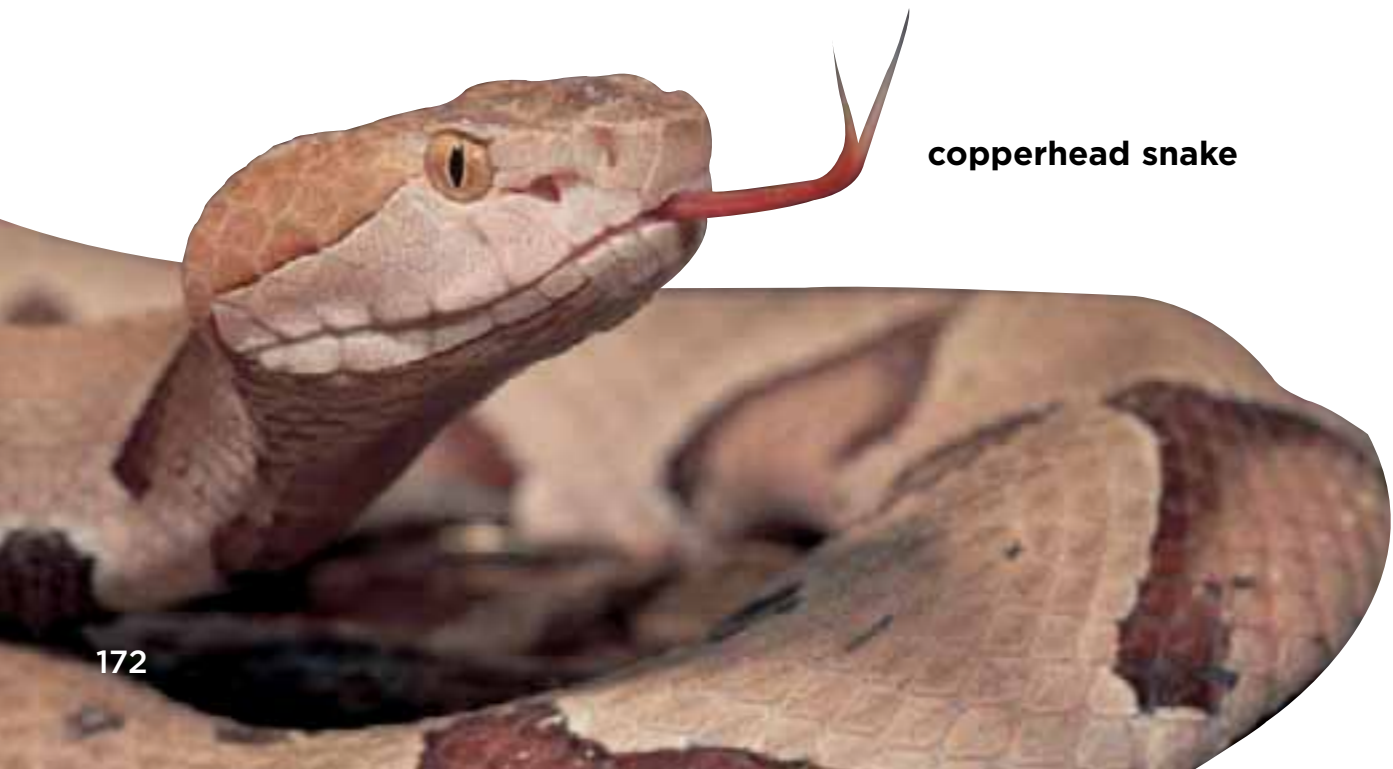
Context Clues

Context Clues are words or phrases that can help you figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word. For example, you might figure out that *species* means *kinds* after reading the third sentence of this selection.

There are about 130 different **species** of snakes found in the United States and Canada. Many people are afraid of snakes because they think they are poisonous. However, only four kinds of poisonous snakes live in the United States. One, the coral snake, is in the cobra family. The other three snakes belong to the pit viper family. A bite from a poisonous snake can kill a person. However, most people bitten by snakes **survive** if they are treated quickly.

All snakes have some characteristics in common. For example, none of them hear well. Instead, they are constantly aware and **alert** for times when the ground **vibrates**, or shakes slightly. They feel, rather than hear, something coming.

copperhead snake



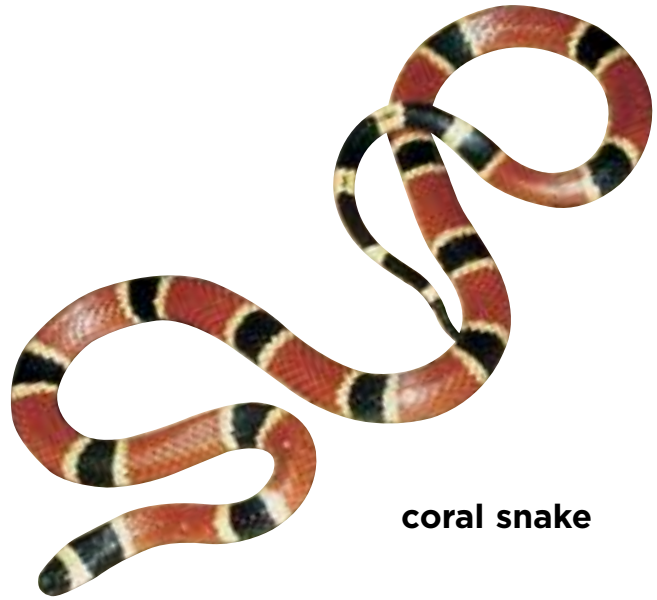
Snakes also have a keen sense of smell. They use their tongues to pick up smells from the air. They sort out these smells to find out whether an animal in their nearby **surroundings** is **prey**. Snakes are **predators** that hunt other animals for food. Snakes usually eat small animals, sometimes swallowing them whole.

Coral Snakes

Coral snakes live in the southern part of the United States. Their shiny red, yellow, and black bands make them easy to spot. A coral snake has a small head. You can see its fangs at the front of its mouth. When a coral snake bites, it shoots poison into its prey. The animal soon stops breathing and dies.

Pit Vipers

A pit viper is named for the two large pits or dents on each side of its head. When both pits feel the same temperature, the pit viper knows it is facing its prey



coral snake

and it springs forward. **Lunging**, the viper digs its fangs into the animal. The poisonous bite causes bleeding and swelling that leads to death.

The three types of pit vipers in the United States are rattlesnakes, copperheads, and cottonmouths. Copperheads and cottonmouths are sometimes called moccasins.

Pit vipers live in the southeastern United States, the West, and the Midwest.

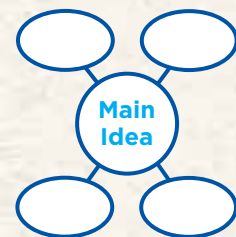
Reread for Comprehension



Summarize

Main Idea and Details

A Main Idea Web helps you decide which information is important to include in a summary. Use your Main Idea Web as you reread “Poisonous Snakes” to summarize the main idea and the important details of the selection.



Comprehension

Genre

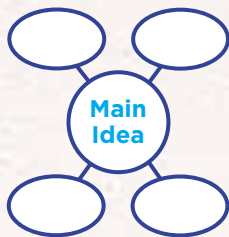
A **Nonfiction Article** gives information and facts about a topic.



Summarize

Main Idea and Details

As you read, use your Main Idea Web.



Read to Find Out

How do rattlesnakes catch their prey?

RATTLERS!

by

Ellen Lambeth

by
Ellen
Lambeth

Rattlesnakes have a bad reputation. No wonder! They look mean. They sound spooky. And you *know* about their nasty bite. But mostly they're misunderstood. So here is all you ever wanted to know about rattlesnakes.



They're a group of snakes that have what no other snakes have: rattle-tipped tails. They also have thick bodies, wide heads, cat-like eyes, and long, hollow fangs that fold away when they're not needed. Their dull colors and patchy patterns help them blend in with their **surroundings**.





There are about 30 different **species** (kinds), and you can find at least one kind or another in almost every state. Rattlers also live in southern Canada, Mexico, and Central and South America.

Different rattlers hang out in different habitats. For example, sidewinders are in deserts, and many timber rattlers live in rocky woodlands. Canebrake rattlers can be found in swamps, while prairie rattlers live in grasslands.



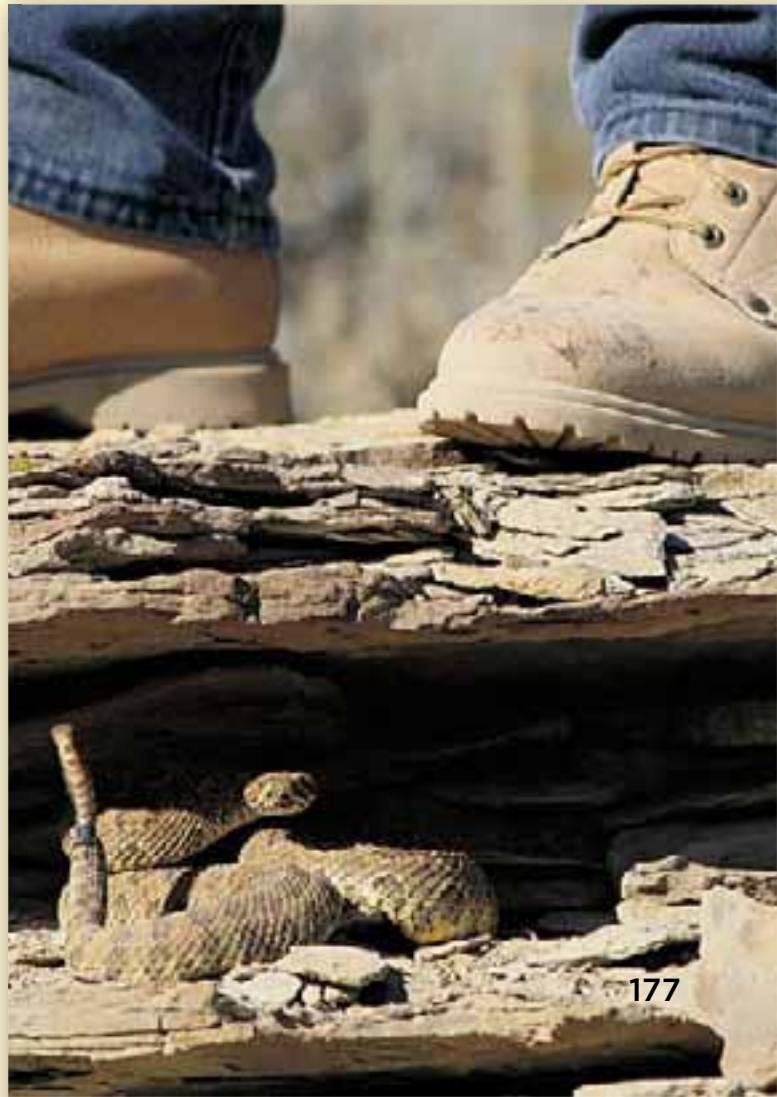
Main Idea

Name two details that support the main idea in the paragraph “Where do rattlers live?”



To their **prey**, they’re deadly! To people, their bite is painful . . . and *sometimes* deadly. But it’s very unusual for a person to be bitten: People and rattlers aren’t often in the same place at the same time.

Even when they are, most rattlers would rather stay hidden or slither away than attack. The prairie rattler in the photo **(see right)** has been surprised by a hiker. Its vibrating rattle is giving the hiker a clear warning: *Don’t take another step forward!*





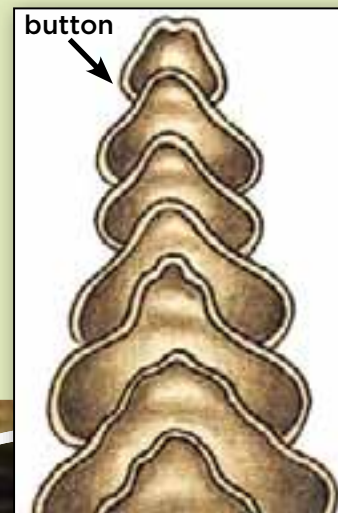
The rattle is a stack of hard sections of skin (**see drawing**). In other snakes, all of the skin comes off during shedding. In rattlesnakes, some stays attached at the end of the tail.

The beginning of the rattle is called the button. It stays stuck to the end of the tail the very first time a young rattlesnake sheds its skin. The next time the snake sheds, a new section is added underneath the button, and so on.

Each section fits loosely over the one under it. When the snake **vibrates** its tail, the sections rattle against each other and make a buzzing sound.



No. A section is added each time a rattlesnake sheds. But some snakes shed several times a year. Others shed not as often. Also, one or more of the rattle's sections may have broken off.





First it strikes by **lunging** toward the prey or enemy. The mouth opens wide, and the fangs swing out (**see above**). When the snake hits its target, the fangs sink in deep. The rattler may—but doesn't always—pump venom (poison) through each fang. All this happens in about a second.



Yes, especially if a doctor treats it right away. If the kind of snake is known, the person may be treated with medicine made from the venom of the snake. And how do people get venom to make medicine? By “milking” the snake! (**see right**)





Most kinds go for small mammals—such as mice, squirrels, and rabbits—and sometimes birds. Some kinds eat mostly lizards, and others eat mostly frogs.



It picks a good spot and waits. When prey comes along, all the snake's senses are on **alert**. First it may feel vibrations in the ground. Next it looks about and gathers scent molecules on its tongue. It sticks the tip of the tongue into a special

smelling organ on the roof of its mouth. Then it uses deep pits on its face to sense body heat coming from the prey. Finally the snake knows exactly where the prey is—and STRIKES!



It sinks in its fangs and pumps in venom. Then it lets go and waits. If the dying prey crawls away, no problem. The snake can follow the scent trail with its tongue. Then the snake grabs the prey headfirst and swallows it whole.

(see above)



Rattlers, like all snakes, get water from the food they eat. But sometimes they suck some in from a puddle or pond, as the western diamondback rattler (**see below**) is doing.



All sizes. The eastern diamondback probably is the biggest. It can get to be 6 feet (1.8m) long or more. But usually it grows no more than 4 feet (1.2m) or so. Most of the smallest species, such as the pygmy rattlesnake, are less than 20 inches (50 cm).





Sure. Big animals, such as bison, sometimes crush them underfoot—by mistake or on purpose. And some animals eat rattlesnakes. Red-tailed hawks nab lots of them. And so do other snakes—especially king-snakes **(see black-and-white snake above)**. Other animals, such as coyotes, may gobble up a rattler once in a while.

How can **predators** eat a rattler without getting hurt? Some are quick enough to keep from being bitten. Others don't seem to be bothered by the venom.



Main Idea

Name two details that support the main idea on this page.





Two kinds—the New Mexican ridge-nosed and the Aruba Island rattlesnakes—are on the U.S. endangered species list as “threatened.” That means they could easily become endangered. So they must be protected by law. Many other kinds also are a lot rarer than they once were. Here’s why:

Humans have changed many of the places rattlesnakes live—by plowing under grasslands or draining wetlands, for example. That can make it hard for the rattlesnakes to find food or hiding places.

Humans have also killed way too many rattlers—sometimes for the skin or meat, but more often just for “fun” or out of fear.



No. They give birth to live young—usually at summer’s end. A mother rattlesnake may have only one baby . . . or more than twenty! But the average number is eight.

Each young rattler is inside a thin sac when it comes out of the mother. Soon it wriggles itself free.

Like the newborn timber rattler **(see left)**, the young snakes may stay near their mother for several days or longer. But then they all go their separate ways.



Rare Rattler Rescue!

Most people want to know how to protect themselves from rattlesnakes. But one scientist and his family want to help protect rattlesnakes from people.

Hugh McCrystal is a herpetologist (her-pih-TOL-uh-jist). And his two best helpers are his kids, Rachel and James.

The McCrystals are studying the ridge-nosed and rock rattlesnakes. These shy, rare snakes live in the mountains of southeastern Arizona. The more the McCrystals learn about them, the easier it will be to protect them.

But how do you study a dangerous creature up close? Carefully! First Dad catches a rattler and sticks it headfirst into a plastic tube so it can't bite. Then James scans it with a special machine (**below**). If the McCrystals have caught the snake before, it will have an ID tag that they had put under its skin. The machine works like a store scanner to “read” the tag.

Rachel writes down which snake it is and then records the animal's weight, length, and temperature. (If it's a new snake, they give it a tag and number.) She also jots down other information, such as where the snake was found and what it was doing. After they let the snake go, they hunt for another one.

The family compares the information with other information they've already collected. That way, they can keep track of each rattler and find out more about what it needs to **survive**.



Rattle Around with ELLEN Lambeth



Ellen Lambeth writes for magazines, mostly about animals. Besides meeting monkeys and avoiding snake bites, she talks with scientists, watches videos, and visits zoos. It's a lot of hard work, but the more Ellen learns, the more she wants to know. She has a pet dog and a horse at home. Ellen has taught each of them tricks, but sometimes feels they are the ones teaching her.



Find out more about
Ellen Lambeth at

www.macmillanmh.com



Author's Purpose

Ellen Lambeth used a question-and-answer text structure. How does this information help you to determine her purpose for writing?

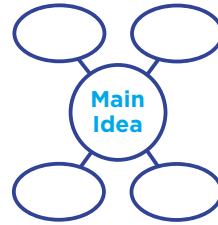


Comprehension Check



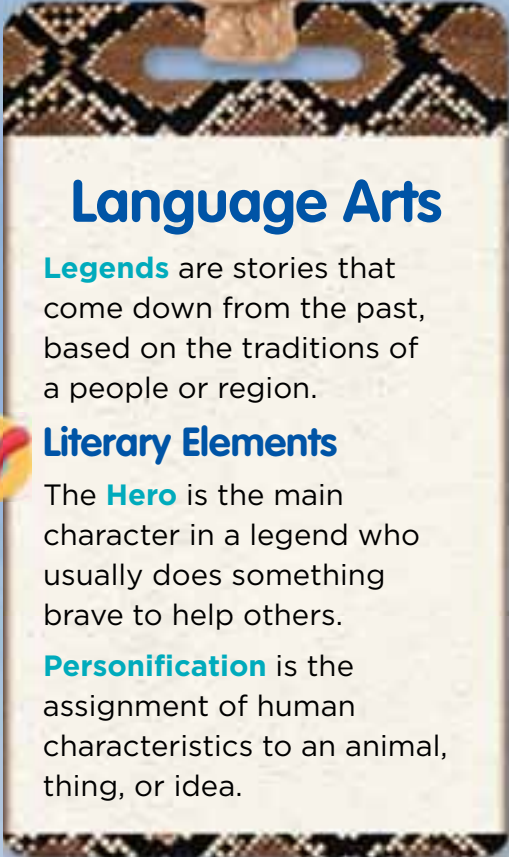
Summarize

Use your Main Idea Web to help you summarize “Rattlers!” Be sure to include only the most important information in your summary.



Think and Compare

1. What is the main idea of the three passages on page 180? Make a list of details to help you find the main idea.
Summarize: Main Idea and Details
2. Reread the first page of “Rattlers!” How do you think the author feels about rattlesnakes? Include specific examples from the text to support your answer. **Apply**
3. Explain whether you think rattlers and other snakes are misunderstood. Discuss any personal encounters that you may have had with snakes. **Evaluate**
4. Rattlers are on the endangered **species** list. What can be done to help keep these snakes from becoming extinct?
Analyze
5. Reread “Poisonous Snakes” on pages 172–173. How are coral snakes and rattlesnakes similar? How are they different? Use evidence from both selections to support your answer. **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Language Arts

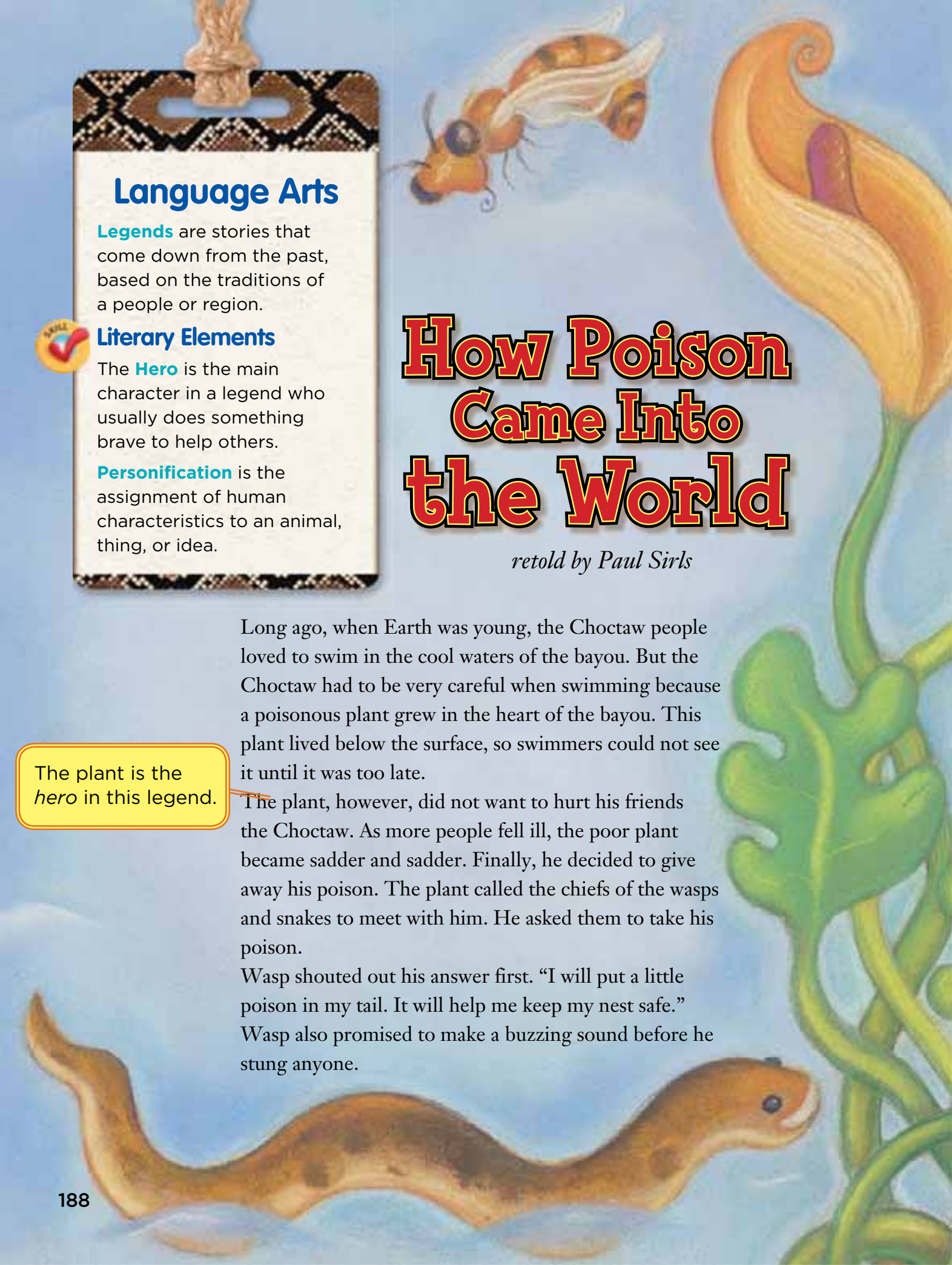
Legends are stories that come down from the past, based on the traditions of a people or region.



Literary Elements

The **Hero** is the main character in a legend who usually does something brave to help others.

Personification is the assignment of human characteristics to an animal, thing, or idea.



How Poison Came Into the World

retold by Paul Sirls

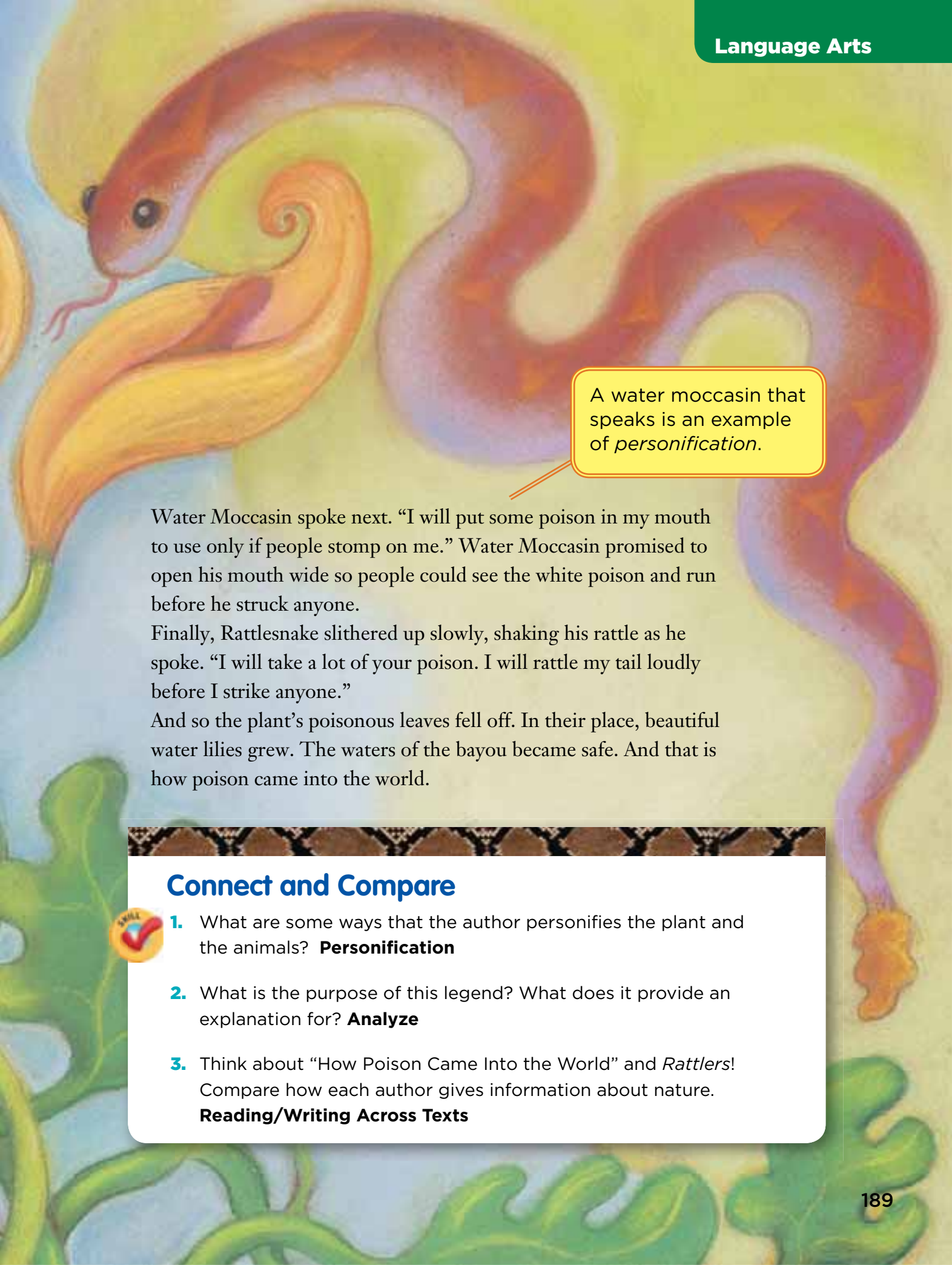
Long ago, when Earth was young, the Choctaw people loved to swim in the cool waters of the bayou. But the Choctaw had to be very careful when swimming because a poisonous plant grew in the heart of the bayou. This plant lived below the surface, so swimmers could not see it until it was too late.

The plant is the *hero* in this legend.

The plant, however, did not want to hurt his friends the Choctaw. As more people fell ill, the poor plant became sadder and sadder. Finally, he decided to give away his poison. The plant called the chiefs of the wasps and snakes to meet with him. He asked them to take his poison.

Wasp shouted out his answer first. "I will put a little poison in my tail. It will help me keep my nest safe."

Wasp also promised to make a buzzing sound before he stung anyone.



A water moccasin that speaks is an example of *personification*.

Water Moccasin spoke next. “I will put some poison in my mouth to use only if people stomp on me.” Water Moccasin promised to open his mouth wide so people could see the white poison and run before he struck anyone.

Finally, Rattlesnake slithered up slowly, shaking his rattle as he spoke. “I will take a lot of your poison. I will rattle my tail loudly before I strike anyone.”

And so the plant’s poisonous leaves fell off. In their place, beautiful water lilies grew. The waters of the bayou became safe. And that is how poison came into the world.

Connect and Compare



1. What are some ways that the author personifies the plant and the animals? **Personification**
2. What is the purpose of this legend? What does it provide an explanation for? **Analyze**
3. Think about “How Poison Came Into the World” and *Rattles!* Compare how each author gives information about nature.

Reading/Writing Across Texts



Writer's Craft

A Strong Conclusion

A persuasive letter flows smoothly from beginning to end. Base a **strong conclusion** on the details you have written. Be sure to sum up your thoughts about your topic.

I wanted to explain my opinion about reptiles. I included these details.

I summed up my thoughts with a strong conclusion.

Write About Your Opinion

Springfield Herald

22 Main St.

Springfield, TX

July 1

Dear Editor:

My favorite exhibit at the zoo is the Reptile House. Every time I visit I am more convinced that reptiles are not as dangerous as people think.

These creatures are no threat to people passing through the Reptile House. They are kept in locked cages and a security guard patrols every aisle.

Outside in the woods people are also too afraid of reptiles. Very few humans are attacked by reptiles each year. They usually need to be provoked before they will bite. If people knew all the facts about reptiles, they would appreciate them much more.

Sincerely,

Isabel S.

Fifth-Grade Student

Your Turn

Write a letter to the editor about how you would improve your school or community. State your opinion clearly and include a strong conclusion. Remember that people will be more likely to read your letter if you give good reasons for your opinion. Use the writer's checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- ☐ **Ideas and Content:** Does the letter have a **strong conclusion**?
- ☒ **Organization:** Do the ideas in the letter follow in a logical order?
- ☒ **Voice:** Did I make it clear that I care about my topic? Do I sound as though I am talking to the reader?
- ☒ **Word Choice:** Did I choose words that express my feelings?
- ☒ **Sentence Fluency:** Did I use a variety of sentence types?
- ☒ **Conventions:** Did I use proper punctuation for a formal letter? Did I check my spelling?